

pending claims are also reproduced below. Marked-up copies of the amended claims as required by 37 C.F.R. §1.121(c)(ii) are provided in the Appendix to this Response.

- Sub C.17
1. (Once Amended) A workpiece management system for storing and transferring workpieces within an environment that is isolated from ambient conditions, comprising:
a load port assembly adapted to support a container having a container door and a container shell, said load port assembly being capable of separating the container door from the container shell to provide access to workpieces supported by a cassette located within the container;
at least two stockers, said stockers being capable of storing a workpiece that has been removed from the container; and
a workpiece transfer mechanism for transferring workpieces between said stockers and a container.
 2. (Once Amended) A workpiece management system as recited in claim 1, wherein said stockers store workpieces in a substantially vertical orientation.
 3. (Once Amended) A workpiece management system as recited in claim 1, wherein said stockers in the workpiece management system may be varied between one and six.
 4. (Once Amended) A workpiece management system as recited in claim 1, wherein said stockers in the workpiece management system may be varied between one and eight.
 5. (Once Amended) A workpiece management system as recited in claim 1, wherein said stockers in the workpiece management system may be varied between one and twelve.
 6. (Once Amended) A workpiece management system as recited in claim 1, wherein said stockers may be stored remotely from the workpiece management system.

7. (Once Amended) A workpiece management system as recited in claim 1, wherein said stockers may be used for bulk transport of reticles away from the workpiece management system.

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8. (Once Amended) A reticle management system, comprising:
a load port assembly being capable of supporting a SMIF pod having a pod door and a pod shell, and being adapted to separate the pod door from the pod shell to provide access to the reticles contained within the SMIF pod;
at least two reticle stockers capable of storing a plurality of reticles that have been removed from the SMIF pod, said reticle stockers including:
a rotatable central shaft;
a plurality of annular carousels, each said annular carousel being coaxially aligned with and secured to said rotatable central shaft, and having multiple substantially radially oriented slots extending outward from said rotatable central shaft such that said slots store a reticle in a substantially vertical orientation; and
a fan filter unit that circulates clean air by reticles seated in said slots; and
a reticle transfer mechanism for transferring reticles between said reticle stockers and the SMIF pod.

9. (Cancel)

10. (Once Amended) A reticle management system as recited in claim 8, wherein said reticle stockers may be stored remotely from the reticle management system.

11. (Once Amended) A reticle management system as recited in claim 8, wherein said reticle stockers may be used for bulk transport of reticles away from the reticle management system.